



NEWTON COMMUNICATIONS ACCESS CENTER INC.

Building community through access to technology

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Federal Communications Commission

445 12th St., S.W.

Washington, D.C. 20554

Chairman Powell

Commissioner Abernathy

Commissioner Adelstein

Commissioner Michael Copps

Commissioner Martin

In the Matter of:

MB Docket No. 02-227

**2002 Biennial Regulatory Review – Review of the
Commission’s Broadcast Ownership Rules and
Other Rules Adopted Pursuant to Section 202 of
the Telecommunications Act of 1966**

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners:

I call your attention to the referred report of empirical data published by **journalism.org** at <http://www.journalism.org/resources/research/reports/ownership/default.asp> as the results of a five-year study by **The Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ)** and **The Committee of Concerned Journalists (CCJ)**.

The study, executed in collaboration with Princeton Survey Research Associates, was funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. [© 2003 Project for Excellence in Journalism, 1900 M Street, NW, Suite 210, Washington, DC 20036; Phone: 202.293.7394 Fax: 202.293.6946 mail@journalism.org]

This exhaustive statistical study debunks many myths that have arisen from both critics *and* supporters of concentrated media ownership. You are invited to study this report's detailed conclusions.

However, one thing is abundantly clear from the study. A diverse multiplicity of media outlet owners is far more likely to create quality local news nationwide than does a scarcity of owners.

Here, cited without permission, are some of the report's conclusions:

- Smaller station groups overall tended to produce higher quality newscasts than stations owned by larger companies-by a significant margin.

- Network affiliated stations tended to produce higher quality newscasts than network owned and operated stations-also by a large margin.
- Stations with cross-ownership in which the parent company also owns a newspaper in the same market-tended to produce higher quality newscasts.
- Local ownership offered some protection against newscasts being very poor, but did not encourage superior quality.

By these often remarkably contradictory findings, the only unifying theme to be found is that the American public is better served by a diversity of ownership models, and that the Commission should not encourage any permissive approach to greater media ownership consolidation.

As a member of the national board of directors of the Alliance for Community Media, I am keenly aware of how community journalism, local news, and local community access to teleproduction (PEG access) all contribute to the diversity of media voices. It is vitally important that the Commission not lessen the diversity of media voices. Please protect the voices in this "information choir" that is a vital part of our country's bedrock of freedom -- namely, the free marketplace of ideas.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul D. Berg", with a stylized, flowing script.

Paul D. Berg

Executive Director

Newton Communications Access Center, Inc.